



Lesson 8 of 8

Prepping for a Career With Plants

Created: 06/2025 by the National FFA Organization

Description of Lesson: *Students will participate in an interactive career preparation simulation where they will assume roles as job seekers, hiring managers and industry professionals. This lesson will provide hands-on experience in applying for jobs, conducting interviews and networking within the plant science industry.*

Student Learning Objectives:

After completing these activities, students will ...

1. Analyze the job application and hiring process within the plant science industry.
2. Develop effective interview strategies and practice answering common interview questions.
3. Explore networking techniques and the importance of professional connections.

Suggested Grade Level:

Grades 9 and 10 (This lesson is written so instructors can scale up or down based on class needs.)

Suggested Time: 120 minutes (*Time requirements may vary based upon student understanding and class schedule.)

Resources/References:

1. Website: AgExplorer (2023), AgExplorer.FFA.org
2. Website: Resume Generator, <https://resumegenerator.FFA.org/>
3. Website: Syngenta, <https://www.syngenta.com/careers>
4. Website: The Writing Center, <https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/coverletters/>
5. Website: Vision Board Templates, <https://www.canva.com/templates/s/vision-board/>

Related Resources:

1. AgExplorer Implementation Guide, <https://FFA.box.com/s/w3o6ep5l2509qtwlfsgkrkc7l8o3d143m>
2. Cover Letter- Polishing, <https://FFA.box.com/s/6ir1tfx00mik89l8p3p8fb9v1moe6q>
3. FFA Resume Generator: What Do I Need? <https://FFA.box.com/s/1sd86gppz6nuwtcecew5ajx33dh38s8m>
4. Who Is Syngenta? <https://FFA.box.com/s/rn1aabyi6ndcils1l1mptx4ewkiw340j>

Equipment and Supplies Needed:

1. A copy of the "Grow Your Future Career" worksheet for each student.
2. Internet access
3. Blank paper
4. Markers
5. Magazines to cut out pictures for the vision boards

Vocabulary:

1. Career Objective
2. Cover Letter
3. Networking
4. Resume
5. Vision Board

Name: _____

Cross-Curricular Connections:

English/Language Arts
• Create a resume. • Read an article and answer analysis questions. • Create a cover letter. • Create a vision board.

SAE and FFA Connections

1. Agronomy CDE, FFA.org/participate/cdes/agronomy/
2. Floriculture CDE, FFA.org/participate/cdes/floriculture/
3. Nursery/Landscape CDE, FFA.org/participate/cdes/nursery-landscape/
4. SAE Idea Cards, <https://FFA.box.com/v/saeideacards>

Student Activity Sheets:

Direct access to student activity sheets without lesson plan or answer key for easy upload to a learning management system or printing for classwork.

<https://ffa.box.com/s/snml2o72mrqx1c6zj14l6pce8w9uvtgl> (Word)

<https://ffa.box.com/s/sj7jx3x09o54rorl173rvczipufhd6tf> (PDF)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1idZ525sScsSjFP1eVcfN25LpZHxE8nhxWIng9Pe5kRI/copy> (Google)

These Activities Are Aligned to the Following Standards:

FFA Precept

- FFA.PL-A.Action: Assume responsibility and take the necessary steps to achieve the desired results, no matter what the goal or task at hand.
- FFA.PL-C.Vision: Visualize the future and how to get there.
- FFA.PL-E.Awareness: Understand personal vision, mission and goals.
- FFA.PL-F.Continuous Improvement: Accept responsibility for learning and personal growth.
- FFA.PG-I.Professional Growth: Assume responsibility for attaining and improving upon the skills needed for career success.
- FFA.PG-J.Mental Growth: Embrace cognitive and intellectual development relative to reasoning, thinking and coping.
- FFA.CS-M.Communication: Effectively interact with others in personal and professional settings.
- FFA.CS-N.Decision Making: Analyze a situation and execute an appropriate course of action.

AFNR Cluster Skills

- CS.05. Describe career opportunities and means to achieve those opportunities in each of the Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources career pathways.

Common Core – Speaking and Listening

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

Common Core – Science & Technical Subjects

- AG5 Describe career opportunities and means to achieve those opportunities in each of the Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Career Pathways.

AFNR Career Ready Practices

- CRP.04. Communicate clearly, effectively, and with reason. Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal and/or visual methods.
- CRP.07. Employ valid and reliable research strategies. Career-ready individuals are discerning in accepting and using new information to make decisions, change practices or inform strategies.
- CRP.08. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. Career-ready individuals readily recognize problems in the workplace, understand the nature of the problem, and devise effective plans to solve the problem.
- CRP.10. Plan education and career path aligned to personal goals. Career-ready individuals take personal ownership of their own educational and career goals, and they regularly act on a plan to attain these goals.

Name: _____

Partnership for 21st Century Skills

- Communication
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Initiative and Self-direction
- Leadership and Responsibility

Lesson Plan:

1. **Bell Ringer:** Think about a time when you had to make a good first impression. What strategies did you use, and how did it impact the outcome?
2. **Introduction:** *Today, you will step into the roles of job applicants, hiring managers and industry professionals to experience the career preparation process firsthand. This hands-on experience will deepen your understanding of what it takes to navigate the career preparation process and succeed in today's competitive job market.*
3. **Activity:** Each student needs a copy of the worksheet "Grow Your Future Career."
 - a. **Part 1:**
 - Students will explore the Syngenta Careers site (<https://www.syngenta.com/careers>) to find a plant science career that interests them.
 - Instruct students to fill in the activity sheet with information about that career.
 - b. **Part 2:**
 - Have students visit the online resource [The Writer's Handbook: Writing Cover Letters](#) and answer the questions on their student activity sheets.
 - When done, instruct students to use the cover letter template to write their own cover letters for the career they chose in Part 1.
 - c. **Part 3:**
 - Students will use the questions on their student activity sheets to determine what information they need for their resumes.
 - Guide students to have this completed worksheet with them when they work with the [FFA Resume Generator](#) to complete their own resumes.
 - If there is a section that students do not have experience with, just skip that box and head to the next.
 - **Students must have an account to utilize the FFA Resume Generator.**
 - If students are not able to create an account, instruct students to utilize a resume template from Canva, Google Docs or Microsoft Word.
 - d. **Part 4:**
 - Students will choose a partner and take turns acting as the interviewer and the applicant.
 - Students should choose at least five questions from the list on their student activity sheets to ask their partner during the interview.
 - When done with both roles, students should complete the reflection questions on their student activity sheets.
 - e. **Part 5:**
 - Students will create a Career Vision Board to showcase what they learned about themselves and their career interests. Example vision boards can be found on Canva, <https://www.canva.com/templates/s/vision-board/>.
 - Guide students through the questions on their student activity sheets before they begin their vision boards.
4. **Optional – Extended Learning Opportunities (Not factored into time requirement):**
 - a. Students can attend a career fair, job shadow a professional in the industry or conduct an informational interview with someone working in plant science.

Name: _____

5. **Exit Ticket:** What is one change you will make to improve your resume or interview skills before applying for a real job?

Name: _____

Grow Your Future Career

Part 1

Directions:

Explore the Syngenta Careers site (<https://www.syngenta.com/careers>) to find a plant science career that interests you. Fill in the activity sheet below with information about that career.

1. Job Title:
2. Location:
3. Why are you interested in this position?
4. What experience do you already have that makes you a good fit?
(Think about FFA, classes, jobs or volunteering.)
5. What parts of this job seem exciting or challenging to you?
6. What questions would you ask in an interview for this job?
7. How does this job connect to your personal interests or goals?
8. What kind of environment would you work in (lab, field, office, etc.)?
9. What is one professional skill you want to improve to be more prepared for this job?

Name: _____

Part 2

Directions:

Visit the online resource [The Writer's Handbook: Writing Cover Letters](#) and answer the questions below. When done, use the cover letter template to write your own cover letter for the career you chose in Part 1.

1. What should you include in your cover letter?
2. How should a cover letter be organized?
3. Why are cover letters important?

Cover Letter Template

Type First and Last Name Here

Street Address, City State Zip

Cell: Insert Your Phone Number Email: Insert Your Email Address

July 15, 2025

Recipient First and Last Name

Company Name

Street Address

City, State Zip

Re: Insert Job Title

Dear Choose a title. Insert Last Name of Recipient:

I read with interest your posting for Insert Job Title on AgCareers.com. I possess the necessary skills you are seeking and would be a valuable addition to Insert Company Name.

My work as Insert job title/volunteer position at Insert Company name or Organization has provided me the opportunity to develop the qualifications you are seeking. My responsibilities included insert the sentences you created from the skills and keywords from the job description. Make sure they flow together and make sense!

I have attached my resume for your review, and I look forward to speaking with you further regarding the position of Insert Job Title. I can be contacted via phone (Insert cell phone number) or email (Insert email address). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Type First and Last Name Here

Name: _____

Part 3

Directions:

Use the worksheet below to determine what information you need for your resume. Have this completed worksheet with you when you work with the [FFA Resume Generator](#) to complete your own resume. If there is a section that you do not have experience with, just skip that box and head to the next. You will need an account to utilize the resume generator. Ask your teacher for help if you do not already have one.

Information Needed	Your Information
What is your objective? (Your objective should explain your career and educational goals.)	
Where have you worked? Include all dates that you were employed, job duties and addresses for each place of employment.	
What leadership experience do you have? Include all opportunities that you have had as a leader within organizations. Examples: Holding an office within a club or being a team captain	
What community service have you done? The focus here is on all the volunteer work completed in your school career. Examples: worked for the local food pantry or animal shelter	
What classes have you taken? Highlight schoolwork that taught skills relevant to the job for which you are applying.	
Have you received any awards or honors? If so, list them in the box along with the year you got the award or honor.	

Name: _____

List someone who can serve as a reference for you. Always be sure that you ask whomever you put down as a reference if they are willing to be your reference. It is best if these individuals are bosses, supervisors, coaches or teachers. It is important that all individuals listed are not relatives or friends.	
List a second person who can serve as a reference for you. Always be sure that you ask whomever you put down as a reference if they are willing to be your reference. It is best if these individuals are bosses, supervisors, coaches or teachers. It is important that all individuals listed are not relatives or friends.	
List a third person who can serve as a reference for you. Always be sure that you ask whomever you put down as a reference if they are willing to be your reference. It is best if these individuals are bosses, supervisors, coaches or teachers. It is important that all individuals listed are not relatives or friends.	

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO NOTE:

1. List any clubs or teams you are associated with as well as the years of participation.

2. List any FFA activities you have done along with the years you participated.

Name: _____

Part 4

Directions:

You and your partner will take turns acting as the interviewer and the applicant. Choose at least five questions from the list below to ask your partner during the interview. Be sure to speak clearly, make eye contact and take notes so you can offer helpful feedback.

Sample Interview Questions (Ask at least five):

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in this position?
3. What strengths do you bring to this role?
4. Describe a time you solved a problem.
5. How do you handle working on a team?
6. Where do you see yourself in five years?
7. What do you know about this company or industry?
8. Tell me about a time you had to work under pressure.
9. How do you prioritize tasks when you're busy?
10. What makes you a good fit for our company's values or mission?

Feedback and Reflection

After the interview, complete the section below based on your partner's performance.

Interviewer: Provide Feedback to the Applicant

- One thing they did really well:
- One area they could improve:
- Which question was answered best? Why?

Applicant: Self-Reflection

- Which part of the interview made you feel most confident?
- Which part felt the most challenging?
- What is one thing you'd do differently next time?

Name: _____

Part 5

Directions:

You will create a Career Vision Board to showcase what you learned about yourself and your career interests from this whole lesson. Example vision boards can be found on Canva, <https://www.canva.com/templates/s/vision-board/>.

What to Include on Your Vision Board:

1. Career Focus

Choose one career you researched, practiced for or were inspired by during this unit. Write the name of the career clearly in the center or top of your board.

2. Keywords and Visuals

Add at least five keywords or phrases that represent your goals, strengths or values. Then, add visuals or drawings to bring your vision to life!

3. Personal Mission Statement or Motivational Quote

Write one or two sentences that capture who you are or what drives you. This could be:

- A quote that inspires you.
- A sentence about what you hope to achieve in your career.
- A statement of your values or purpose.

4. Career Readiness Goals

Pick three career skills that you want to develop further. Write why each one is important to the job you chose.

Example:

- Communication: to present ideas to customers or teammates
- Problem-Solving: to handle challenges in the field
- Professionalism: to represent a company or brand well

Name: _____

KEY: Grow Your Future Career

Part 1

Directions:

Explore the Syngenta Careers site (<https://www.syngenta.com/careers>) to find a plant science career that interests you. Fill in the activity sheet below with information about that career.

1. Job Title: **Answers will vary.**

2. Location: **Answers will vary.**

3. Why are you interested in this position?

Answers will vary.

4. What experience do you already have that makes you a good fit?
(Think about FFA, classes, jobs or volunteering.)

Answers will vary.

5. What parts of this job seem exciting or challenging to you?

Answers will vary.

6. What questions would you ask in an interview for this job?

Answers will vary.

7. How does this job connect to your personal interests or goals?

Answers will vary.

8. What kind of environment would you work in (lab, field, office, etc.)?

Answers will vary.

9. What is one professional skill you want to improve to be more prepared for this job?

Answers will vary.

Name: _____

Part 2

Directions:

Visit the online resource [The Writer's Handbook: Writing Cover Letters](#) and answer the questions below. When done, use the cover letter template to write your own cover letter for the career you chose in Part 1.

1. What should you include in your cover letter?

Match the employer's needs to your skills
Tailor to each job opportunity
Write clearly, use action verbs
Show some personality

2. How should a cover letter be organized?

Opening Paragraph: why you are writing, point of contact (How you found out about the job), brief detail about yourself

Body Paragraphs (two or three): highlight biggest point on enclosed resume, highlight points that directly link to position, show how your education and experience link to position

Closing Paragraph: stress action, indicate if other materials are included or being sent, thank reader for consideration

3. Why are cover letters important?

It is the first impression employers have of you. It gives them a little insight into who you are.

Cover Letter Template

Type First and Last Name Here

Street Address, City State Zip

Cell: Insert Your Phone Number Email: Insert Your Email Address

July 15, 2025

Recipient First and Last Name
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

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Dear Choose a title. Insert Last Name of Recipient:

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Where have you worked? Include all dates that you were employed, job duties and addresses for each place of employment.	Answers will vary.
What leadership experience do you have? Include all opportunities that you have had as a leader within organizations. Examples: Holding an office within a club or being a team captain	Answers will vary.
What community service have you done? The focus here is on all the volunteer work completed in your school career. Examples: worked for the local food pantry or animal shelter	Answers will vary.
What classes have you taken? Highlight schoolwork that taught skills relevant to the job for which you are applying.	Answers will vary.
Have you received any awards or honors? If so, list them in the box along with the year you got the award or honor.	Answers will vary.

Name: _____

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Answers will vary.

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Answers will vary.
- One area they could improve:
Answers will vary.
- Which question was answered best? Why?
Answers will vary.

Applicant: Self-Reflection

- What part of the interview made you feel most confident?
Answers will vary.
- What part felt the most challenging?
Answers will vary.
- What is one thing you'd do differently next time?
Answers will vary.

Name: _____

Part 5

Directions:

You will create a Career Vision Board to showcase what you learned about yourself and your career interests from this whole lesson. Example vision boards can be found on Canva, <https://www.canva.com/templates/s/vision-board/>.

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